

a tamarind tree and take refuge in the branches above, in sheer fright at the sight of a few wild dogs which were merely passing that way.

I can think of only one explanation for the action of the deer. This wild dog pack had been hunting in our area for over a month and the sambar had probably got used to them and for the sake of protection had gathered together and acted in the manner in which they did quite unconscious of the danger involved.

KING & PARTRIDGE,
SOLICITORS,
OOTACAMUND,
NILGIRIS,
November 26, 1968.

E. R. C. DAVIDAR

2. THE CASPIAN TIGER *PANTHERA TIGRIS* *VIRGATA* (ILLIGER)

(With a plate)

Except for a few tigers in northern Iran (near the south-eastern shore of the Caspian Sea) and northern Afghanistan (?) and for stragglers in southern Turkmenia (U.S.S.R.) the Caspian tiger, *Panthera tigris virgata* (Illiger 1815) appears to be extinct (Perry 1964; Sludskyi 1966; Kirk 1968).

A hundred years ago the Caspian tiger's range extended as far west as the south of the Caucasus (exceptionally Tiflis). Eastwards across central Asia from the Caspian, through northern Persia (Mount Elburz), northern Afghanistan, to Aral Sea, under the Pamirs, River Ili (Plate), Lake Balkash, Tarim, Lake Lop-nor. The range extended as far as east and north as the Altai and southern Ob basin (Ellerman & Morrison-Scott 1951; Mazak 1965; Perry 1964; Pocock 1929; Schaller 1967). Number in captivity: none.

The coloured plate shows E. Tichmeniev's painting 'The Struggle of Semiretshensk Cossacks against the Tiger near the River Ili in the Year 1892'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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SSR, Alma-Ata, for sending me the photograph of E. Tichmeniev's painting.

3221 HOHENBUECHEN 31,
WEST GERMANY,
June 22, 1968.

G. KIRK

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3. LARGE CUCKOO-SHRIKE AND BLACK-HEADED ORIOLE IN KUTCH

On November 16, I first heard and then saw the Large Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae* (Gmelin), at Vijaya Vilas, Mandvi. I came across the bird again on 17-xi-68, but this time it was accompanying a Blackheaded Oriole—*Oriolus xanthornus* (Linnaeus), in immature plumage. The Cuckoo-Shrike, when observed the previous day, was by itself; however, on November 17, it was interesting to watch this bird, in the absence of any companion of its own kind, faithfully following the oriole from one tree-top to another.

This Cuckoo-Shrike utters a distinct, querulous and somewhat parakeet-like call mostly while in flight. Had it not been for these frequent call notes I would most certainly have missed both the birds which (as far as I know) have not been previously met with in Kutch.

BHUJ,
KUTCH,
December 8, 1968.

M. K. HIMMATSINHJI